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## 2. MACAQUES 'KIDNAP' INFANT PALM CIVETS<sup>1</sup>

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During a study of Civet ecology in Hlawga Wildlife Park (2000-2003), I observed two instances of 'adoption' or 'kidnapping' of baby Palm Civets. Hlawga Wildlife Park in Myanmar is a 6.24 sq. km protected area, dominated by secondary mixed deciduous forest, located 35 km north of Yangon. The Park has a mixed fauna of large mammals, such as Sambar (*Cervus uicolor*), Hog Deer (*Axis porcinus*), Red Muntjac (*Muntiacus muntjak*), Eld's Deer (*Cervus eldi*), Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*) and Gaur (*Bos frontalis*), some introduced from other areas in Myanmar (Su Su 2003). It has a current population of c. 280 Rhesus Macaques (*Macaca mulatta*). The Park is frequently visited by local tourists who feed Sambar, Hog Deer, Eld's Deer and Macaques with food bought from local vendors.

On April 22, 2001, my assistant and I were approached by a group of macaques seeking food. One adult male carried a small black animal that was crying like a kitten. We soon identified it as an infant Palm Civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*). The Palm Civet is the most common small

carnivore in the Park. We used food to coax the monkey to surrender the baby Civet, but the macaque held on to it firmly. When we tried chasing, it ran away and climbed on a tree, still holding the baby. The Park's forestry staff reported that they had seen the macaque with the baby Civet for three days. We observed the macaque with the live baby Civet daily for the next three days, the baby's voice becoming weaker each day. Two days later, the Civet was dead but was still being carried by the macaque.

A week after this event, we saw another male macaque, a smaller male, carrying another baby Palm Civet. This infant Civet was alive but was not vocalizing. Unfortunately, we were unable to observe this macaque on subsequent days. It seems probable that these macaques appropriate baby Palm Civets that they encounter in civet nestling sites, in trees. Macaques are known to show paternal behaviour towards infants of their own species (Schino *et al.* 1995), but we have not heard of allo-mothering behaviour in this species.

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